

Germany friendly  
Lemerre's faith  
in the tried

AFP, Paris

Coach Roger Lemerre named a no-surprise 20-man squad for France's friendly international against Germany at the Stade de France to the north of Paris on Tuesday.

It is the first match of the year for France, who are excused from 2002 World Cup qualifying as the reigning champions.

Though there are six changes from their victory over Turkey in November last year, all the players are established squad members.

For the record, Real Madrid's Claude Makelele and Lyon striker Steve Marlet have received confirmation they are in Lemerre's plans.

Under-21 international Philippe Christaval returns, no doubt with the 2002 World Cup in mind, and established players Bixente Lizarazu, Youri Djorkaeff and Christophe Dugary once again feature.

The six players out are Martin Djedou, Pierre Laigle, Willy Sagnol, Johan Micoud, David Trezeguet and Laurent Robert.

Lemerre has also retained Emmanuel Petit even though he is not a first-choice player at Barcelona.

SQUAD

**Keepers:** Fabien Barthez (Manchester United/Eng), Ulrich Rame (Bordeaux)

**Defenders:** Lilian Thuram (Parma/Ita), Marcel Desailly (Chelsea/Eng), Franck Leboeuf (Chelsea/Eng), Vincent Candela (Roma/Ita), Philippe Christaval (Monaco), Bixente Lizarazu (Bayern Munich/Ger)

**Midfielders:** Zinedine Zidane (Juventus/Ita), Patrick Vieira (Arsenal/Eng), Emmanuel Petit (Borcelone/Spa), Claude Makelele (Real Madrid/Spa), Christian Karembeu (Middlesbrough/Eng), Youri Djorkaeff (Kaiserslautern/Ger), Christophe Dugary (Bordeaux)

**Strikers:** Thierry Henry (Arsenal/Eng), Sylvain Wiltord (Arsenal/Eng), Nicolas Anelka (PSG), Steve Marlet (Lyon), Robert Pirres (Arsenal/Eng)

Thailand to play  
Premiership  
giants

AFP, Bangkok

The Thai national football team will play English Premiership clubs Liverpool and Aston Villa in England to prepare for their World Cup qualifiers, the Football Association of Thailand (FAT) said Wednesday.

FAT's secretary-general Worawi Makudi told AFP that Thailand's team would start an England tour in April, with games scheduled at Anfield and Villa Park.

Worawi said the FAT is waiting for dates to be confirmed by the two clubs.

Thailand is also expected to play friendlies against other English clubs, he added, without naming them.

"Our Thai national team will learn a lot of experience by playing with top teams before we play the qualifiers of the World Cup," he said.

Thailand's World Cup campaign begins in May when they face Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Pakistan in group five of the Asian qualifying competition. If they win that group they advance to one of two five-team second round groups, the winners of which advance to the finals.

Liverpool and Manchester United are due to come to Thailand this summer as part of planned Asian swings.

Pua named  
Uruguay  
coach

AFP, Montevideo

Victor Pua, coach of the Uruguayan junior football team, was named coach of the senior side by the national federation on Wednesday following the resignation of Daniel Passarella.

Pua is an appointment from within the federation, having been involved in the country's football for about 20 years. He has already had the top job, leading the side to the final of the Copa America, or South American championships, in 1999.

Pua is currently in Arequipa, Peru, with the Uruguay under-17 team.

Uruguayan football federation president Eugenio Figueredo said Pua would be offered the job till the end of the World Cup qualifiers when he returns from Montevideo.

Uruguay are fifth in the qualifiers which would be a play-off position with the winners of the Oceania section.

Passarella, who won the World Cup as a player with Argentina in 1978, had been at the head of the Uruguayan team since 1999.



Lazio striker Lucas Martin Castroman (R) and Real Madrid defender Geremi fight for possession during their Champions' League Group D match at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on February 21.

Champions League  
Real, Leeds book qtrs. berth

AFP, Paris

Legendary Real Madrid, voted FIFA world team of the century last year, have stamped their authority on the European Champions league in this millennium as in the last.

Raul's equalizer for a 2-2 group D draw at Italian champions Lazio was enough to put them into the last eight draw set for March 16, with the matches due in early April.

Their humble coach Vicente Del Bosque, who played in Madrid's final loss to Liverpool in 1981, is not one to shout about their chances but in private he may be thinking of a ninth victory at the San Siro stadium in Milan on May 23.

Del Bosque, in typical understatement, said after the Lazio game: "I can't say my team is better than last season but it's very solid and compact in all departments."

"They were perfectly up to the task against a dangerous Lazio side and I'm particularly happy about the result."

Eight victories in this competition, including five wins from 1956, have elevated the club into a hallowed status among football enthusiasts.

Such legends of yesteryear as Ferenc Puskas of Hungary and Argentina's naturalised Spaniard Alfredo Di Stefano have now been swapped by the likes of 2000 European footballer of the year Luis Figo and darling of the fans Raul.

Three wins out of three in the second phase was followed by their draw at Lazio which, having

to twice come back and equalize at Rome's Olympic stadium, showed their fighting spirit matches their talent.

Coaches often say saying winning titles is easier than retaining them as everyone is desperate to beat a champion but Madrid have managed to shoulder the pressure admirably.

The rising standard of the competition, marked by outsiders Leeds also reaching the quarter-finals from group D, means a second successive title, last managed by AC Milan in 1990, would multiply their reputation like rabbits in a burrow.

Leeds coach David O'Leary meanwhile played down Leeds' chances of winning the competition.

O'Leary was delighted with his side's 4-1 beating of Anderlecht after criticism had come from the direction of their Belgian hosts.

Aime Anthuenis had made his feelings plain in the wake of last Tuesday's 2-1 defeat to Leeds at Elland Road that O'Leary's side were not a good one, comments he repeated to the Belgian press on the eve of last night's remarkable result.

Such words provided O'Leary with his team talk, and the players with the motivation to produce arguably their best performance of the season, outstripping their 1-0 win against Lazio in Rome.

Anderlecht had won their previous 21 home matches, as well as their last nine in Europe, with their Stade Constant Vanden Stock proving a tough venue to many of Europe's leading lights.

But Leeds refused to bow to statistics and earned their quarter-final display with gusto.

"We will try and keep going,"

said O'Leary. "Nobody gave us a hope in the first group and nobody gave us a hope in this group, but now we are so proud to be in the quarter-finals with two games still remaining."

"But we are not going to win this competition, and I am not fussed either whether we finish first or second in this group. I'm just delighted to have reached this stage."

Leeds best performance in the competition is, with Scottish international Joe Jordan and Billy Bremner in the side, reaching the final in 1975 when they lost the middle final of Bayern's three successive wins.

Bayern were nearly through themselves from Group C following their 3-0 thrashing of hosts Spartak Moscow but a goal from Lyon's Brazilian Edmilson seconds from the end of the 1-1 at Arsenal means they must wait for the outcome of their final two matches.

It would be a major shock however if Bayern, five points ahead of second placed Arsenal and six in front of Lyon, failed to earn their last eight passage.

Lyon must win their final two matches, hope other results go their way, and beat Bayern convincingly at the Gerland stadium on March 6 to have any chance of making the quarter-finals.

Dennis Bergkamp was certain Arsenal could still make the quarter-finals, saying: "An hour after the game, we are still disappointed to let a goal in at the last minute but we're still in second place and confident of qualifying."

"It's difficult to look at it that way when you've had such a disappointment but the reality is we are still well-placed to get through."

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE  
STANDINGS & FIXTURES

REUTERS, London

Standings and remaining fixtures in the second phase of the Champions League after Wednesday's matches:

GROUP A

STANDINGS	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Manchester United	4	2	2	0	6	2	8
Valencia	4	1	3	0	3	1	6
Sturm Graz	4	2	0	2	4	5	6
Panathinaikos	4	0	1	3	2	7	1

Remaining fixtures:  
Wednesday, March 7  
Sturm Graz v Valencia  
Panathinaikos v Manchester United

Tuesday, March 13  
Valencia v Panathinaikos  
Manchester United v Sturm Graz

GROUP B

STANDINGS	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Galatasaray	4	2	1	1	4	4	7
AC Milan	4	1	3	0	5	4	6
Deportivo Coruna	4	2	0	2	5	3	6
Paris St Germain	4	0	2	2	3	6	2

Remaining fixtures:  
Wednesday, March 7  
Galatasaray v AC Milan  
Deportivo Coruna v Paris St Germain

Tuesday, March 13  
AC Milan v Deportivo Coruna  
Paris St Germain v Galatasaray

GROUP C

STANDINGS	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	4	3	1	0	7	2	10
Arsenal	4	1	2	1	5	7	5
Olympique Lyon	4	1	1	2	4	3	4
Spartak Moscow	4	1	0	3	4	8	3

Remaining fixtures:  
Tuesday, March 6  
Olympique Lyon v Bayern Munich  
Arsenal v Spartak Moscow

Wednesday, March 14  
Bayern Munich v Arsenal  
Spartak Moscow v Olympique Lyon

GROUP D

STANDINGS	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	4	3	1	0	11	5	10
Leeds United	4	3	0	1	7	4	9
Anderlecht	4	1	0	3	4	10	3
Lazio	4	0	1	3	4	7	1

\*Real Madrid and Leeds United qualify for quarter-finals

Remaining fixtures:  
Tuesday, March 6  
Real Madrid v Leeds United  
Lazio v Anderlecht

Wednesday, March 14  
Leeds United v Lazio  
Anderlecht v Real Madrid

\*Top two in each group qualify for the quarter-finals.

RESULTS AT  
A GLANCE

REUTERS, London

Collated summaries of Wednesday's second phase Champions League matches:

GROUP C  
In London  
Arsenal 1 (Dennis Bergkamp 33) Olympique Lyon 1 (Edmilson)

In Moscow  
Spartak Moscow 0 Bayern Munich 3 (Mehmet Scholl 17, 75pen, Paulo Sergio 87)

GROUP D  
In Rome  
Lazio 2 (Pavel Nedved 4, Hernan Crespo 53) Real Madrid 2 (Solari 32, Raul 73)

In Brussels  
Anderlecht 1 (Jan Koller 75) Leeds United 4 (Alan Smith 12, 37, Mark Viduka 33, Ian Harte 80pen)

Played Tuesday:  
GROUP A  
In Manchester  
Manchester United 1 (Andy Cole 12) Valencia 1 (Wes Brown 88og)

In Athens:  
Panathinaikos (Ioannis Goumas 73) 1 Sturm Graz 2 (Markus Schopp 25, Mario Haas 41)

GROUP B  
In La Coruna  
Deportivo Coruna 2 (Victor 40, Djalminha 73) Galatasaray 0

In Paris  
Paris St Germain 1 (Laurent Robert 75) AC Milan 1 (Jose Mari 90)

Former French captain Didier Deschamps admitted Wednesday that he has felt "useless" as a player since his arrival at Spanish Primera Liga side Valencia.

"It's the first time in my sporting career that I've felt useless," said Deschamps, who skipped France to the World Cup and Euro 2000 glory.

The midfielder, who is continuing his comeback following a three-month injury lay-off, did not play in Tuesday night's 1-1 Champions League Group B match against Manchester United.

He was also unable to play in last Saturday's First Division match against Las Palmas because of gastroenteritis, and was on the subs bench as a replacement for Spanish international Ruben Baraja.

But Deschamps added he did not want to interfere in the good working of the team and would have to wait for an opportunity to play like the other team members.

More than 170  
arrests at  
Spartak match

AFP, Moscow

More than 170 people were arrested at the Spartak Moscow versus Bayern Munich European Champions League match at the Luzhniki Stadium, police said on Thursday.

Most of the arrests were for minor offences and public drunkenness, police added.

Five people were taken to hospital after the match, won 3-0 by Munich. Two of those had broken bones while the three others had drunk too much alcohol.

About 70,000 spectators, including 500 from Germany, were at the game despite the biting cold and snowy conditions.

Not much to celebrate

AFP, Milan

AC Milan's season went from bad to worse Tuesday with their 1-1 Champions League Group B draw with French strugglers Paris St Germain leaving their progress into the quarter-finals in the balance.

Spaniard Jose Mari's last-gasp leveller may have saved face but it was hardly an appropriate way for the "Rossoneri" (red and blacks) to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the takeover of the club by media magnate Silvio Berlusconi.

The Champions League, after all, is their last chance of silverware this season as they are 17 points behind Serie A leaders AS Roma and eliminated from the Italian Cup.

When he became the majority shareholder on February 20, 1986 - he was named president a month later - Berlusconi set about the task of transforming the ailing club into the best side on the planet.

But things have come circle with Milan fans beginning to criticise the tycoon-cum-politician who they believe is neglecting the club as he concentrates on his candidature for prime minister for the right-wing opposition coalition in this year's elections.

When Berlusconi took the helm Milan fans were used to mediocrity. Since the 1960s when they won two European Cups (1962-3, 1968-9) and the Inter-

Champions League  
None sure as yet

AFP, London

Late goals from AC Milan and Valencia kept their Champions League dreams alive on Tuesday as they salvaged draws against Paris St Germain and Manchester United.

Milan, who have won the European Cup five times, and Valencia, runners-up to Real Madrid in last season's final, were both heading for defeat in their respective matches with time fast running out.

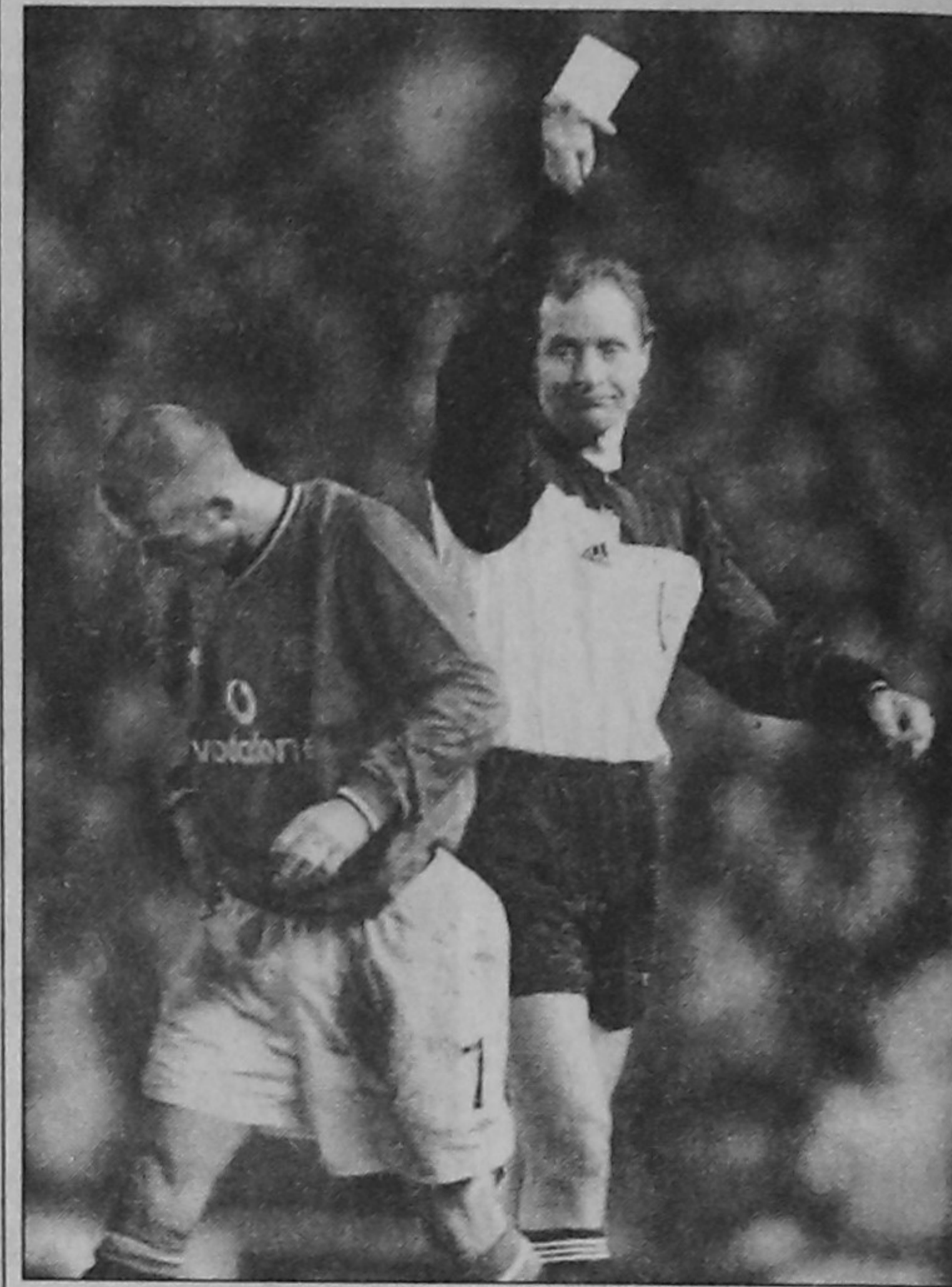
But a last minute goal from substitute Jose Mari gave Milan a 1-1 draw in Paris to revive their hopes, while Valencia equalised

they win their last two matches.

Manchester United, who drew 0-0 at Valencia last week and beat them 3-0 at Old Trafford at this stage last season, seemed set for another win when Andy Cole blasted them into the lead after 12 minutes with a brilliantly taken effort in his stride which gave Santiago Canizares no chance.

Victory would have assured United of their fifth successive appearance in the quarter-finals - a Champions League record - but Valencia were rewarded with their late equaliser.

Sturm Graz, the least-fancied side in the competition, ended Panathinaikos's hopes of advancing with a 2-1 win in Athens to follow up last week's 2-0 home



Manchester United superstar David Beckham (L) sees the yellow card in the match against Valencia.

three minutes from time at Old Trafford against Manchester United through a Wes Brown own goal in a 1-1 draw.

The other two matches on Tuesday ended in a 2-0 win for Deportivo Coruna over 10-man Galatasaray, while Sturm Graz, the surprise qualifiers for this stage, kept alive their dreams of a place in the last eight with a 2-1 win over Panathinaikos in Athens.

The outcome of the four matches means that no teams are yet certain of their places in the quarter-finals.

Manchester United, who were just three minutes away from a certain place in the last eight, lead Group A with eight points, followed by Valencia (6), Sturm Graz (6) and eliminated Panathinaikos (1).

Galatasaray lead Group B with seven points followed by AC Milan (6), Deportivo Coruna (6) and Paris St Germain (2).

The group is so wide open that all four teams can still qualify but PSG, although they are bottom, and AC Milan will go through if

victory over the Greeks. Markus Schopp (25) and Mario Haas (41) put the Austrians into a commanding position and Ioannis Goumas's 73rd minute header was not enough for the Greek side.

Galatasaray stayed top of Group B despite being well-beaten by Deportivo Coruna who won with goals from Victor (40) and Djalminha (73).

Galatasaray were reduced to 10 men after 58 minutes when Vedat Inceefe was sent off for a tackle from behind on Victor that earned him his second yellow card.

With PSG drawing 1-1 with AC Milan, Group B is now wide open.

PSG, who have had such a disappointing domestic season, took the lead with a 20-metre Laurent Robert free-kick after 75 minutes, but they failed to hold their lead for the last 15 minutes.

The competition continues on Wednesday with Arsenal playing Lyon and Spartak Moscow playing Bayern Munich in Group C and Anderlecht playing Leeds and Lazio meeting Real Madrid in Group D.



Giovane Elber, Bayern Munich's Brazilian striker (front), holding off Igor Mitresky of Spartak Moscow on February 21.

Serie A or nothing for Lazio

AFP, Rome

Lazio as of Thursday will devote their entire attention to the defence of their Italian title following their 2-2 draw at home to Real Madrid Wednesday night, a result that ensured their elimination from the Champions League.

After losing their first three second phase matches Lazio produced their best performance so far against the defending champions from Spain but twice Real equalised after the Roman side had taken the lead.

But now - in the time-honoured maxim for teams eliminated from knockout competitions - it is time for Lazio to concentrate on the league, the Scudetto they won for only the second time last year a quarter of a century after their inaugural crown.

"The only thing I can ask of the boys now is not to get downhearted and react badly on Sunday against Verona," said their coach Dino Zoff who replaced England-bound Sven Goran Eriksson last month when Lazio's Champions League ambitions were already compromised.

"Furthermore all we were lacking against Real was the knockout blow," said Zoff who saw his team twice take the lead through Czech Pavel Nedved and Argentinian Hernan Crespo only for Santiago Solari and Raul to equalise for the 'meringues'.

Lazio join fellow title challengers Juventus, already eliminated from European competition, in being able to focus squarely on the domestic championship.

Assuming Serie A leaders AS Roma do not pull off a miracle result against Liverpool Thursday night in their UEFA Cup second leg (they lost the first leg 2-0 in Rome) they too will have no dis-

tractions as of Friday morning. Roma, eight points clear of Lazio and six ahead of Juventus, are determined to win their first Scudetto since 1982-3 and Lazio will be determined to do all they can to ensure they do not have the humiliation of their hard-won prize being taken down the corridor of the Olympic Stadium they share with their arch-rivals.

Crespo too tried to rally the troops, saying: "It's normal to be disappointed after going out like that. It is a wound that will remain in our heart but we must lift our heads up and beat Verona. There are 15 games left (in the league) and we have only this objective so we must try and win all our games and see what happens."

One positive for Zoff was the outstanding performance of recently-signed Argentinian winger Lucas Martin Castroman who gave Real's much-vaunted Brazilian defender Roberto Carlos a torrid time, creating both goals.

Giggs worry  
for United

AFP, London

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson confirmed Wednesday that winger Ryan Giggs will miss Sunday's Premier-ship showdown against second-placed Arsenal because of a hamstring injury.